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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL

CONTINUING "THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER"

DECEMBER 1917

EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

At the meeting of the Department of Superintendence in Kansas City provision was made for a committee on publicity.

Committee of the Department of Superintendence It is the duty of this committee to take whatever steps are possible to bring to the attention of communities the best types of organization which can be found in American schools.

The committee is making an effort to collect, with the co-operation of school superintendents and others, rules adopted by boards of education, school charters, and state school laws which deserve general recognition as examples to be followed. The committee also aims to find out about school budget systems that are in operation and any other forms of school administration that ought to be imitated. When material of this sort comes to hand the committee will see that it is put into the form of news items and distributed.

It is hoped that in this way wide publicity may be secured for matters of school administration. To this end the co-operation is sought of the leading newspapers of the country. Very frequently a superintendent can secure the co-operation of his local newspaper in printing news items of the type described above. Sometimes the best form of co-operation with the committee will be a statement of the need for publicity of this type in a given community, even where there is no possibility of a preliminary arrangement

with the local paper for the publication of such news items. The committee will send items in such cases and aim to secure their publication.

In order to make possible the collection and distribution of material of this sort the committee has divided the country into sections and has allotted certain states to each member of the committee. So far as possible superintendents are requested to correspond with the members of the committee in accordance with the schedule of states given below:

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND ASSIGNMENTS OF STATES FOR WHICH
EACH MEMBER IS RESPONSIBLE

J. H. Phillips, Birmingham, Alabama	C. M. Plummer, North Portland, Oregon
Alabama	Idaho
Florida	Oregon
Georgia	Washington
Louisiana	Charles C. Hughes, Sacramento, California
Mississippi	Arizona
Tennessee	California
J. H. Francis, Columbus, Ohio	Nevada
Kentucky	E. A. Winship, Boston, Massachusetts
Ohio	New England
Pennsylvania	New York
West Virginia	I. I. Cammack, Kansas City, Missouri
Edith K. O. Clark, Cheyenne, Wyoming	Arkansas
Colorado	Kansas
Nebraska	Missouri
Utah	Oklahoma
Wyoming	Charles H. Judd, Chicago, Illinois
C. Potter, Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Delaware
Illinois	Maryland
Indiana	New Jersey
Michigan	New Mexico
Wisconsin	North Carolina
C. Hartwell, St. Paul, Minnesota	South Carolina
Iowa	Texas
Minnesota	Virginia
Montana	
North Dakota	
South Dakota	

The National Education Association announces that the place of the next summer meeting will be Pittsburgh, Pa. The place of meeting of the Department of Superintendence has been changed. Atlanta found that it would be impossible to entertain the department because of the crowded conditions of the city due to the establishment of a military camp near by. It was at first reported that this meeting would go to Boston; but when the committee began to make arrangements it was found that a number of other conventions were to be held at Boston at the date set for the meeting of the department, and it seemed advisable to consider more deliberately either a change in the date of the meeting or a change in the place. As the *Journal* goes to press the matter has not been finally settled, but the announcement will be ready very shortly.

It has been customary for the *Journal* to make an announcement in this issue of the dinner of Chicago alumni and former students which is annually held in connection with the meeting of the Department of Superintendence. The announcement is made in a preliminary way at this time and will be given more fully in a later issue.

The National Child Labor Committee has usually designated the fourth Sunday in January for observance as Child Labor Day in churches and the following Monday for observance in the schools. It is especially urged this year that all who are interested in the welfare of children promote the observance of this day and the distribution of information with regard to the work of the committee and the needs of promoting this work.

The war has made a heavy draft upon high schools and has created the temptation for the withdrawal from elementary schools of all children as soon as they reach the age for entrance upon industries. The Federal Child Labor Law has been vigorously attacked in many quarters, and one judge has granted an injunction against its operations in North Carolina. It is of the greatest importance, therefore, that the people of the country should be made intelligent on the issues that are involved between education and child labor.

The experience of England and France has been commented on a number of times in this *Journal*. Their attitude early in the war was that schools might be allowed, without serious injury to the community, to suffer somewhat in response to military demands. But a steady tendency has shown itself in recent years in those countries to enlarge education rather than curtail it. In England the program for school legislation presented to parliament by Mr. Fisher, the minister of education, is one of the most comprehensive that has ever been laid before an English parliament. There can be no doubt at all that England will adopt this program, thereby adding very greatly to the opportunities of children in Great Britain for a more complete and extended education.

In this country public expenditures are sure to be scrutinized very carefully during the coming years. School activities will be questioned and the demands of labor will be vigorously set forth. Whatever can be done to concentrate the thinking of communities on the importance of education and the necessity of wise legislation with regard to child labor should be done.

The National Child Labor Committee, 105 East 22d Street, New York City, will issue to anyone who is interested a series of pamphlets bearing on the problem of child labor. This committee is also prepared to co-operate with anyone who wishes help in preparing programs for child-labor meetings.

The examinations which have been made of men drafted for the Army give more information than has ever been at hand in the United States before with regard to the physical condition of the men of the country. The bearing of the facts found on school programs and the general character of the facts themselves are clearly set forth in an article published in the *New York Times* reporting an interview with Dr. J. A. Nydegger, who is in charge of the United States Public Health Service in Baltimore.

Some extracts from that article are as follows:

While physicians who had made extensive studies of the condition of health and physique of the youth of the country expected the percentage of

rejections to be high, few believed that conditions would be as bad as they were shown to be by the medical examinations of drafted men. The showing made by this medical survey will have great moral value in awakening the country to the need for better medical and sanitary care for children in schools, especially in rural schools, Dr. Nydegger said. He added that the United States was behind most European countries in provisions for the health of school children. In Europe the need for strong and healthy men for armies has turned the attention of governments to the health of school children. England was aroused, Dr. Nydegger said, when the medical examination of recruits during the Boer War showed that many were unhealthy and defective and that their troubles in a vast number of cases could be traced to bad physical surroundings and methods in English schools.

"As soon as the Boer War was over," Dr. Nydegger said, "the British government proceeded to introduce throughout the United Kingdom a well-devised medical inspection of schools, compulsory athletics, and mild military training to correct, as far as human endeavor was able, the physical defectives. Other European countries arrived at the realization of this defect in their school systems at an even earlier date, and provided systems of athletic training and medical inspection in their schools, beginning with kindergartens.

"While in this country most of the city schools have adopted medical inspection, most of the rural institutions have none. In this lies the fact that the unsanitary conditions in these places produce 75 per cent of the physical defects which are today barring men from the United States forces. Defective eyes, ears, teeth, and throats among the youth of rural communities have been found to be due largely to conditions in the rural schools. Improper desks and seats also have caused much spinal curvature, leading to other faulty conditions. These conditions ought to be corrected at once, and school children all over the country should be examined because defects arising at their period of life as a rule cannot be overcome later.

"The introduction of a single innovation or procedure is not going to correct all of the physical defects existing in our young men. It must be a gradual process, beginning with an efficient universal medical inspection in our public schools at the age of six years, coupled with a well-devised system of physical training and mild military exercises to harden young men for the more strenuous universal military training which is to follow after school days are over.

"This is a great national problem, and the federal government should handle it, or at least co-operate with the states to the extent of seeing that defects are corrected, with the view of remedying conditions, if not for the present generation of young men, for the generations of the future."

Education in personal hygiene by means which respond in every way to the needs of this ideographic age is offered in the new series of health charts just issued from the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, as originally prepared under the direction of Dr. C. E. A. Winslow, curator of its Department of Public Health.

**Public-Health
Charts**

These charts are especially adaptable for schools where it may not be possible or desirable to use educational films, and may be easily transported.

The Departments of Public Health and Public Education of the Museum five years ago prepared three series of public-health charts for the use of the schools of New York City. Each consisted of a folio of wall charts illustrated from original photographs and devoted to the following subjects: "The Spread and Prevention of Communicable Disease," "Insects as Carriers of Disease," and "Bacteria and Their Work in the World."

The demand for these in the schools was many times greater than the supply, and doubtless many teachers were discouraged in their efforts to obtain them. As a step toward meeting this demand the Museum has just issued a new edition of the set entitled, "The Spread and Prevention of Communicable Disease," in sufficient number, the institution hopes, to supply all the schools of the city.

On each is a large engraving delineating by scenes from life the mistakes of diet and bodily care which lead to human ills.

The charts are 22×28 inches each and each set consists of 15 charts on heavy paper, bound at top and bottom with tin, and suited in every way for hanging on the wall. Although each chart is clearly labeled the sets are accompanied by a booklet containing information which may be of service to teachers in talks on that important subject of physical well-being.

The delivery and collection of the charts are being attended to by the Museum. As with the circulating collections of natural-history specimens, the loan period is three weeks.

Owing to the numerous requests from educational institutions outside of the city, arrangements have been made to offer a limited number of sets for the nominal price of \$6.00 each, express charges extra.

Educators who desire further information regarding the new edition may obtain it by addressing George H. Sherwood, curator, Department of Public Education, American Museum of Natural History, New York City.

From every part of the country come announcements of night schools which are more largely attended than ever before. In the same notes come statements of expanded opportunities and appeals to that part of our population which has come from foreign lands to take on the ways of American life.

Two typical reports may be quoted as showing the general character of all. To quote from the first:

There are nearly 1,300 pupils in the Duluth night schools. This is nearly three times the number enrolled last year, when night schools really worthy the name started. The increase is largely the result of close co-operation between Superintendent Hoke and the employers of labor.

The value of these schools has been gotten to the foreign element, and to the working men in general. They have found there is something for them that is worth while.

They have found they can get what they want and that it is practical. They have found sympathy and understanding of their problems. It is a getting together on a mutual basis.

To so organize these schools as to meet practical requirements, to make them in fact schools with vocational adjuncts, is a huge task. It is not a duplicating of the day schools, but a totally new system adapted to a very different purpose.

Every feature from textbooks to teaching force has to be organized to fit the new situation and new demands. Textbooks of first to fourth grades are a total misfit in teaching English to the foreigners. The best primary teacher for children may be a total failure with these adults. So the best teachers for children in other branches may be wholly inadequate to interest and get results with grown-ups.

The attendance, however, proves that these difficulties are being met and solved, while the benefits go beyond the schools themselves, as it is recognized by all educators and social workers that the only permanent and successful basis for social centers is the night school.

The elders get the school habit. They get used to going to school buildings. Gradually they take their families and there you are—genuine social centers where the schools are for the elders and children, with something for them all.

The second report states:

Night schools in the District of Columbia opened their doors last night to a record attendance.

It is estimated that the class in shorthand and typewriting at Business High School has achieved the record enrollment of 350.

Classes in shopwork, cooking, and millinery at McKinley Manual Training School are so large that additional classes will be formed in order to accommodate the applicants.

More than seventy-five pupils have enrolled in the arithmetic and book-keeping class at Business High School. The attendance figures in the other classes at Business follow:

100 in English; 50 in French and Spanish, and 25 in law and salesmanship.

The registration in the colored night schools was exceptionally heavy, according to the assistant superintendent of colored schools. Although no figures are available it is expected that additional classes will have to be formed in many of the colored schools.

The United States Civil Service Commission makes a special request of educational journals that they publish the following

announcement:

**A Civil-Service
Call**

The Commission requests, on behalf of the American people, that you publish in your journal as frequently as you can, as an item of news, a notice of the war need of the government for stenographers and typewriters. The difficulty in securing a sufficient number of stenographers and typewriters for the unusual demands of the government is giving the Commission great concern.

The publication of this call ought to be accompanied by a equally vigorous statement to the effect that the schools of this country are in need of teachers. In some quarters the need has become so serious that school committees have been obliged to appeal to state authorities, and wholly untrained teachers have been appointed or the schools have been closed.

The fact is that human resources are being taxed to the limit in this country. Labor of every type has never been so much in demand. This goes to show that the war is a national undertaking and is drawing into its operations every person and every item of capital in the nation. The Civil Service Commission is giving expression in its field of operation to a need which educational people should take up and keep clearly before the country.

As this *Journal* goes to press, it appears that the election in New York will have a marked effect upon the educational policy in that city, particularly with reference to the extension of the so-called "Gary plan." Whether it is correct to interpret the result of the election as in part a protest against this plan, or whether the agitation against it was purely a political affair, the new administration, which will have the appointment of the new board of education of seven members, will undoubtedly see to it that the experiment is discontinued, or at least greatly restricted. This matter is presented in the following quotation from the *New York Globe*:

Mayor-elect Hylan will name the first small board of education in New York City. It is certain that not a single one of the present majority members of the board of education will be continued in office after the first of the year. It is equally certain that the new board will be drawn from among those who contributed most to the progressive administration of the board of education that preceded it. It will be some weeks before the list of members is announced, but the seven members are pretty well known by this time.

The new board of education will be in complete control of the public schools for seven years. The term of office of the members now named will be from one to seven years each, and their successors will be appointed for the full seven-year term.

It will have large and unusual powers and will have to fill many of the most important positions in the school system during its term of office.

It is settled now that the Gary plan will not be extended; that Superintendent Wirt, of Gary, Ind., will no longer be employed in this city; that the experiment with the Gary plan will be continued in a few of the schools, and that a fixed programme of school administration will not be imposed upon the school system.

The board of superintendents has taken up the question whether or not the programme for extending the Gary plan to the fifty schools for which the funds were last authorized should be carried out. It was voted to reject the plan for twelve Brooklyn schools.

The superintendents deemed the proposed changes unnecessary and itemized their objections to show that no duplication was needed in the organization of the twelve schools specified.

The appropriations for the twelve schools, which will be rescinded if the recommendations of the superintendents are approved, amount to nearly \$170,000.

We have here another of the too-frequent examples of the mixture of politics and education. It is probable, however, that there

is another lesson to be drawn from this incident than merely that the school should be divorced from politics. In a democratic community in which the control of the school system rests ultimately with the people, it is necessary, not only that wise policies shall be carried out in the school, but also that the people shall be convinced of the wisdom of the school administration. It seems probable that the rather strenuous opposition which appeared to exist in some quarters to the Gary plan could not have been a purely artificial piece of agitation during the election. The people apparently were not sufficiently intelligent upon the issues, at any rate, to prevent their being easily confused with reference to them by one of the candidates for mayor. This in spite of the fact that to an onlooker the arguments which are used against the experiment appear to be of a very insufficient character.

In spite of the reaction which is taking place in New York, the movement for the more economical use of the school building and **A Modified Gary System** for the enrichment of the curriculum which accompanies it appears to be gaining headway elsewhere, as in Philadelphia is indicated by the following clipping from the *Philadelphia Ledger*:

Philadelphians who may fear a strike similar to the one in New York at the Steele School, Sixteenth and Cayuga streets, where the Gary plan is said to have been introduced, have no cause to fear such a result. Those who have followed the situation in New York realize that the uprising is not so much against the system as against certain political issues.

The Gary plan, as now being worked out at the Steele School, has been so modified as to be nearly unrecognizable by one who knows it, and yet it is more than probable that eventually this district will develop a plan which will rival the Gary plan in its adaptability to the needs of a growing school population.

Virtually the only Gary ideas which seem to have been put into use are the plan of keeping the schoolrooms in constant use by the rotation of classes, the installation of an auditorium, which is used by all the classes, and a school library and sewing-room. There is also a revised system of calisthenics, which will include marching, body drills, folk-dances, and games.

The ideals of the principal are to care for the growing school population, to make school work interesting and attractive to teachers and children, and to make the school a center of real educational activities.

It is pretty generally recognized that the war is to have an effect upon the subject-matter and methods of teaching, although the specific changes which are to be made are as yet poorly defined. Perhaps the most radical modification is to take place in the teaching of history. The war has made it very clear that it is necessary for the people to apprehend the national purposes, both of our own country and of others. The war has probably done more to educate the American people in recent European history and in the relationships between European nations than has all of the study of history which they have made in the school. At the same time the war has made necessary an attempt by Americans to define clearly their own purposes as citizens of the nation. This thinking has been done, however, under an emergency, and there is a confusion which might have been prevented in some measure by a broader study of history in the school. It is reported that the National Board of History Teachers, at its conference in Washington, has undertaken a study of some of the changes which are to be brought about. The United States Bureau of Education has issued a pamphlet entitled *Opportunities for History Teachers*, which calls attention, in the quotation which follows, to the necessity of broader conceptions of their subject:

First of all comes the duty of keeping, for teacher and pupil, the habit of at least trying to see things as they really were and are. This is not easy at any time. It is peculiarly difficult at such a time as this, when too many people believe a slight distortion of facts may be a patriotic duty. In the long run loyalty to the country, as well as loyalty to history, are best served by looking facts squarely in the face.

The training of young people and of the parents through the pupils to take an intelligent part in the decision of public questions is important enough at any time, but it is peculiarly so in this war, whose meaning for the individual citizen is not so easily brought home. In 1823 and 1827, when the Monroe Doctrine was under discussion, Daniel Webster referred to the people who thought that Americans had no interest in the European system of mutual insurance for hereditary rulers against popular movements. "What," they said, "have we to do with Europe? The thunder, it may be said, rolls at a distance. The wide Atlantic rolls between us and danger; and, however others may suffer, we shall remain safe." Webster's answer to this question was strikingly similar to some of the utterances of President Wilson, "I think it is a sufficient answer to this to say that we are one of the nations of the earth. . . . We have as clear an interest in international law as individuals have in the laws of society."

That was said long before the steamship, the submarine, and the wireless had broken down still further our "splendid isolation." Today we are fighting for our own rights, but, over and above those special rights of our own, we are fighting for international law itself, without which no nation can be safe, least of all those democratic governments which are less effectively organized for war than for peace.

No one can take an intelligent part in a great conflict for the safety of democracy under an orderly system of international law unless he is really interested in and knows something about other nations than his own—about the difference between a republican government like our own or that of France or the scarcely less democratic constitution of Great Britain on the one side, and, in sharp contrast to all of these, a strongly monarchical system like that of the German Empire, in which the most important measures affecting the national welfare may be practically determined by a single hereditary sovereign or a small group of such sovereigns.

An editorial in the *Grand Rapids News* indicates that the National State Teachers' Association of Michigan has passed resolutions on the same topic. The quotation from the paper follows:

The teachers resolved that we should tell our young people that the war of the Revolution was not so much a war against England as it was against the German king of England, George III. During those stirring times this scion of the house of Hanover was trying, not only to coerce the English people, but those, mainly of English birth, who had journeyed to the new country across the Atlantic. In the old country, King George was opposed by such eminent men as Pitt, Burke, and Fox, who were fighting for the rights of Englishmen against the foreign oppressor.

England, as history proves, has not been as bad as its kings. The whole long story of Britain has been one of a struggle to escape oppression by its rulers. One by one the people over there wrung from unwilling sovereigns their rights. When we read the past, we marvel why they kept to the king system. In comparatively recent times they chopped off the head of one king and sent another into exile. For a long period Cromwell ruled them. He ruled with a rod of iron, and while he made the name of England respected the world over, he was not as tolerant as democrats should be.

It appears that American teachers were complacent with the traditional spread-eagle interpretation of the Revolutionary War until the alliance with Great Britain in the present war emphasized the community of interest between the two nations. This is but a single example of the general change which a sudden awakening to present-day realities in national and international affairs must have on our treatment in the school of the events which have led up to the present.